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Evaluation of the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project: Follow-up report

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Evaluation of the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project: Follow-up report

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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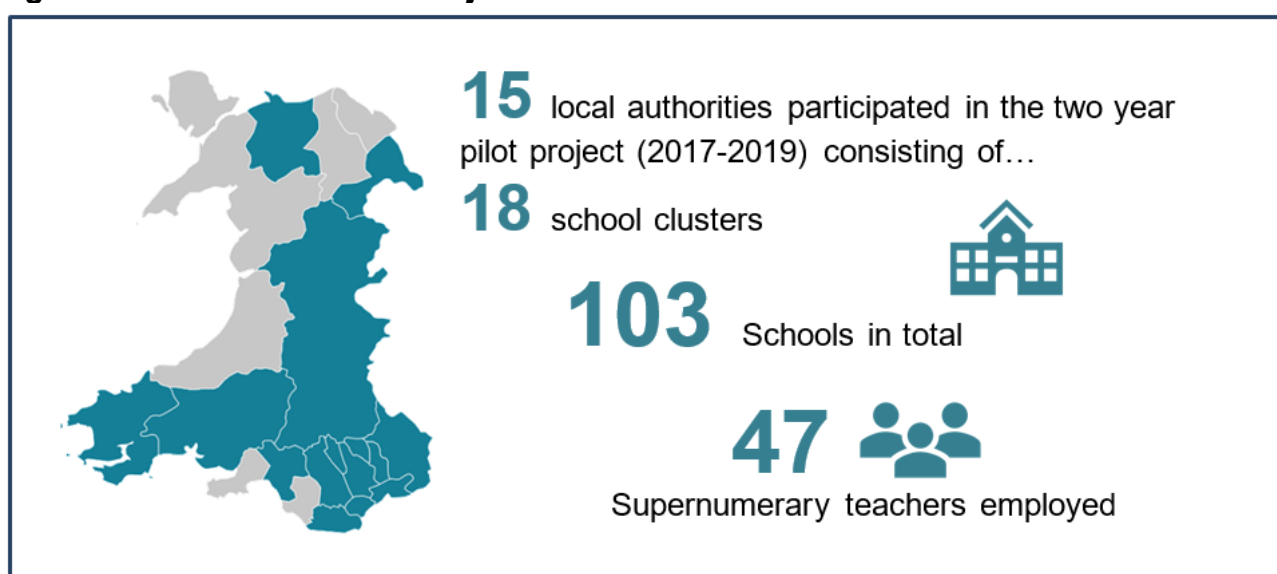
Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Cluster lead	Headteacher or senior manager in a school responsible for coordinating Project activity across a cluster.
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
NPS	National Procurement Service
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PPA	Time spent by teachers away from their classroom for planning, preparation and assessment
Supernumerary teacher	A floating teacher employed by one school or a cluster of schools to provide cover for absent teachers.
TA	Teaching Assistant

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2018, Arad Research was appointed by the Welsh Government to evaluate the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project (the Project). The Welsh Government provided grant funding for two years for 18 pilot school cluster projects in 15 local authorities, as shown in Figure 1.1, to trial the employment of supernumerary teachers to manage absence cover (planned or unplanned). Each cluster comprised a group of schools within a local authority with one school acting as the lead and main grant holder for the project. Clusters were provided with grant funding to cover 100 per cent of the Project costs for year 1 from September 2017; with clusters provided with grant funding for 75 per cent of costs for year 2 (from September 2018). A further aim of the Project was to build workforce capacity by employing recently qualified teachers.

Figure 1.1: Overview of the Project



- 1.2 In recent years successive publications and policy developments have prioritised improvements to the provision and quality of supply teaching in Wales. One of these proposals was to trial a regional collaborative model for the delivery of supply teaching, following a recommendation by the Supply Model Taskforce.¹ The National Procurement Services Supply Teachers Framework for Wales has been active since September 2019,² and the Welsh Government's workforce development plan³ provides information on the drive to ensure that data and

¹ Supply Model Taskforce (2017) [Ministerial Supply Model Taskforce, Report to the Cabinet Secretary for Education](#). p. 21.

² Welsh Government (2019) [Supply teaching in Wales](#).

³ Welsh Government (2019) [Investing in excellence: Our national workforce development plan 2019-21](#). p. 11.

intelligence builds workforce planning systems, including a focus on well-being and workload. Alongside these wider policy developments, it is also important to note the increased emphasis on ensuring appropriate support for practitioners during the early stage of their careers.

1.3 The Project's intended outcomes were to:

- Implement alternative and innovative arrangements that address school absence cover (planned and unplanned absence);
- Support Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in short-term supply roles in terms of professional development and retention;
- Aid efficiencies, evidence added value and potential cost savings for participating schools; and
- Promote best practice in collaboration and joint working within school clusters.

1.4 The main evaluation report published in November 2019, provided a comprehensive assessment of the design, implementation and outcomes of the Project, and presented learning for future policy and practice in this area.⁴ Key findings from the main evaluation report included:

- The School Based Supply Cluster Model Project **succeeded in enabling schools to work together to design and implement a range of innovative arrangements to address teacher absence cover**. Supernumerary teachers were deployed to address a range of tasks, including emergency supply cover; time to cover teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time; supporting the delivery of cluster-wide projects; set regular class/subject lessons and transition project work.
- The pilot Project has **supported a range of professional development opportunities for supernumerary teachers**. Training was provided to address individual teacher requirements and school development targets. Supernumerary teachers' skills, confidence and competence developed and they particularly benefitted from the experience of teaching across different phases in a range of schools.

⁴ Duggan, B., Glover, A., Grover, T. Feehan, A. (2019). [*Evaluation of the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project*](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 50/2019.

- The pilot Project has **supported several supernumerary teachers to secure permanent employment**. Supernumerary teachers reported they had built positive relationships within the school and wider community, putting them in a stronger position to apply for posts.
- The pilot project has helped to **strengthen and promote collaboration across clusters**. Cluster schools benefitted from the sharing of effective teaching and learning approaches.

1.5 This short follow-up report is informed by data collected during Spring 2020, and explores the longer-term impact of the Project, including changes in the way schools address their supply needs and the impact of the supernumerary role on teachers' employment experience. A final cost-effectiveness analysis is also presented.

1.6 It is important to note that the data collection for this follow-up report was undertaken during the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst the researchers found that many schools and supply teachers remained engaged and willing to contribute to the follow-up research, it is possible that school closures may have negatively impacted the response rate for the surveys.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 A mixed method approach was undertaken for this follow-up report, with opportunities provided for all clusters and supernumerary teachers to contribute. Representatives from all cluster lead schools and all supernumerary teachers were invited to complete short online surveys during the Spring term 2020. Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they would be happy to be interviewed and were then invited to provide additional feedback through a telephone interview. The online questionnaires used can be found in Annex A.
- 2.2 The cluster lead survey focused on how schools had addressed their supply needs following the two-year funded Project period and information on any roles their supernumerary teachers had filled. Further reflections on the impact of the Project on staff, learners and the school were also invited. Supernumerary teachers provided information regarding their current employment status, along with reflections on the impact the Project had on their professional development and career opportunities. As the National Procurement Service Supply Teachers Framework has been active since September 2019, cluster leads and supernumerary teachers were also asked about their engagement with agencies registered on the Framework. Interviews provided an opportunity to clarify experience of the Project, with a particular focus on the impact of the school closures caused by the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.3 Although data collection for this follow-up report took place between March-April 2020 during the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, due to the limited demands that collecting such information via short 10 minute online surveys would place on cluster leads and supernumerary teachers it was decided to proceed with the data collection. However, school closures and the fact that the project funding ended August 2019 may have negatively impacted the response rate. Table 2.1. provides an overview of the data collection methods used to inform this report, including the numbers who were invited to contribute, and responses received. The 25 supernumerary teachers interviewed in Spring 2019 had given their permission to be contacted in 2020. The remaining supernumerary teachers were contacted via their cluster leads. Many of these teachers had ended their engagement with their cluster in July 2019, which may have negatively impacted the response rate for the online survey. Nevertheless, contributions were received from 14 out of 18 clusters,

with either the cluster lead or supernumerary teachers completing surveys. In the case of a few clusters, surveys were completed by both cluster leads and supernumerary teachers.

Table 2.1: Data sources for this report: collection methods, target groups, populations and responses

Data collection method	Target group	Population	Response
Online survey	Cluster leads	18	9
Online survey	Supernumerary teachers	47	12 (from 8 clusters)
Follow-up interviews supernumerary teachers	Supernumerary teachers	6 (consented to being re-contacted in the online survey)	4

2.4 The Project required each cluster to submit six monitoring forms in total to the Welsh Government. At the time of writing the full evaluation report only five of these monitoring claim forms had been submitted by all clusters. This report draws on data from the full set of six monitoring forms from all 18 clusters and draws conclusions on the cost effectiveness of the Project. This is derived from the total number of days covered by supernumerary teachers during the Project and calculating the cost of this cover if it had been provided through agency supply. To inform this calculation, we also determined the average daily supply cost for agency cover used by the clusters involved in the Project. (Section 3).

2.5 This report also includes findings on the following;

- Clusters' current approach to addressing supply cover;
- The impact on clusters of continuing or not continuing the Project for the third year;
- Effective cluster practices introduced during the Project;
- Supernumerary teachers' current roles and future intentions;
- The impact of the Project on supernumerary teachers.

3. Findings

Clusters' current and future approach to addressing supply cover

Key findings

- Two of the nine cluster leads who responded to the survey have continued with the Project during the third year. Both of these cluster leads also reported that they intend to explore continuing the Project in some form from September 2020.
- Financial barriers or costs were reported by clusters to be the main reason for not continuing with the Project.
- All cluster leads reported that their supply needs are met from a range of sources.
- Three cluster leads reported that their approach to addressing supply needs had changed as a result of the Project.

- 3.1 Nine cluster leads provided responses to the survey, with two of these continuing with the Project into the third year (from September 2019). The funding for the Project in these clusters is covered wholly by the local authority in the case of one cluster, and is funded from school budgets in the other cluster. The approach for managing and delivering the Project since September 2020 changed slightly for one cluster: having been placed in a single setting for a block of time, the model changed and the teacher was deployed between schools on an agreed number of days each week.
- 3.2 Five of the seven clusters that did not continue with the Project reported that a 'lack of money in the school budget' was the reason for this. Yet it was reported that two of these clusters employed supernumerary teachers in supply roles at the cluster lead school on fixed term contracts. Another cluster lead reported that teachers were employed in supply roles on permanent contracts in other cluster schools and two other cluster leads reported that their supernumerary teachers were no longer in supply roles but employed as subject/year teachers. Funding for these roles is from schools' core budgets.
- 3.3 Two cluster leads commented that they had hoped to continue the Project in some form from September 2020, with one possibly funding a Higher Level Teaching Assistant 'so that the project has left a legacy'; the other cluster also intended to

restart the Project from September 2020 (but the current school closures and future uncertainty may impact this).

- 3.4 All clusters, including those that continued with the Project, reported that they address their supply needs using a range of sources. Table 3.1 presents the detail for this.

Table 3.1: How clusters address supply needs now (data collected March-April 2020).

Approach to supply cover	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Total
NPS Framework agency supply teachers	2	4	2		1	9
Non NPS Framework agency supply teachers	1	3	2		2	8
Agency Classroom Assistants or Cover Supervisors	1	7	1			9
School employed supply teachers	1	2		1	4	8
Other teachers employed at the school		5		1	3	9
Classroom Teaching Assistants employed at the school		6		1	2	9
School senior managers/headteacher		7			2	9

Source: Cluster lead survey, n=9 (NPS – National Procurement Service)

- 3.5 Table 3.1 shows that almost all clusters reported using a range of sources to address current supply needs. Eight of the nine clusters reported engaging with the National Procurement Service's Supply Teachers Framework, but with varying degrees of frequency.
- 3.6 The most popular responses in relation to clusters' approaches to supply cover included using agency Classroom Teaching Assistants, using Classroom Teaching Assistants employed at the school and using senior school managers/headteachers some of the time. Four clusters reported using their own employed teachers, but again with varying degrees of frequency.
- 3.7 Three cluster leads reported that their approach to managing supply needs had altered as a result of participating in the Project. One reported exploring a similar

model in order to 'reduce the costs of agencies', while another highlighted they now understood the importance of 'using cross phase teachers'. A third cluster noted that they had adapted their approach by ensuring that cover is drawn from existing school staff.

"We could see the benefit of using cover persons known to the children.

Therefore HLTA and TAs from within school are used for cover more often and headteacher covers many absences." (Cluster lead survey response).

Changes to the management and delivery of supply cover from September 2020

3.8 Three cluster leads commented that they will be altering their approach to supply cover for September 2020. The approaches mentioned were:

- Employing two HLTA posts to provide cover across a 3-16 school;
- Employing teachers in a supernumerary role;
- Developing a whole cluster method and response where teachers are available to be used for school improvement tasks, with the need for supply teachers reduced through collaborative tasks and shared planning.

The impact on clusters of continuing or not continuing the Project for the third year

Key findings

- The two clusters that continued for the third year reported significant positive impacts, including on the quality of teaching, on sharing effective practices and learner behaviour.
- Six of the seven clusters not continuing for the third year reported negative impact on staff workload and well-being.
- Four of the seven clusters not continuing for the third year reported negative impact on cost and management time efficiencies, effective teaching and sharing of practices, and opportunities for teacher training.

Continuing the Project for the third year



























































3.9 Only two of the cluster leads who responded to the survey reported that the Project continued for the third year. The impacts observed by both cluster leads during this time included significant positive impact for the delivery of effective teaching,

sharing effective practices and learner behaviour. One cluster also reported significant positive impact in relation to time management and improved efficiency, opportunities for teacher training, staff workload and well-being. Another cluster commented that there had been no impacts in relation to these issues during the third year. As far as cost efficiencies were concerned one cluster reported some positive impact whereas the other noted no impact.

Not continuing the Project for the third year

3.10 In contrast, the impact for the seven clusters that did not continue the Project into the third year is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Impact for clusters of not continuing the Project for the third year

Impact		Response	
£	Cost efficiencies	      	
	Efficiencies in management time	      	
✓	Effective teaching	      	
	Sharing of effective teaching practices	      	
	Learner behaviour	      	
	Opportunities for teacher training	      	
	Staff workload and well-being	      	
Key:	 Some positive impact	 No impact	
	 Some negative impact	 Significant negative impact	

Source: Cluster lead survey, n=7.

3.11 Overall, cluster leads reported negative impact, and in some instances significant negative impact, of not continuing the Project on staff workload and well-being. One cluster lead commented that it had been possible to cover teaching staff during the Project and this had supported the reduction in workload for teachers, which in turn impacted positively on their well-being. The sharing of effective practices and opportunities for teacher training were also reported to be negatively impacted since the funded element finished, with one cluster lead explaining that non-contact time for managers and teachers has been significantly impacted without the availability of the supernumerary teachers. As a result ‘training and research has not happened as often as when the teacher was employed’.

3.12 Another cluster lead reported the mixed impact of not continuing the Project for the third year.

“Continuity in the classroom and understanding of [the school] has been lost. Completion of the claim forms has however freed up some time from a management perspective.” (Cluster lead survey response)

Effective cluster practices introduced during the Project

Key findings

- Collaborative working strengthened during the Project has continued between cluster schools.
- Cluster leads reported on other practices that have continued, these included sharing staff and good practice within clusters.

3.13 Eight cluster leads provided information on effective practices introduced during the Project that individual schools or the cluster had continued to employ beyond the end of the Welsh Government funded element of the Project.

3.14 Collaborative working was the practice most frequently mentioned by cluster leads, with a few reporting that this has increased as schools work on cluster projects together; one cluster lead commented that existing ‘cross phase working and improved transitional arrangements’ were introduced during the Project. Another reported that they had continued collaborative practices established during the project, including a shared attendance officer across their cluster. Sharing of resources and awareness of the good practice taking place in schools within the

cluster had worked 'extremely well' according to one cluster lead and as a result of the Project not continuing 'schools are working more in isolation again'.

Experiences of cluster leads

- 3.15 Four cluster leads provided further thoughts on their experience of the Project. It was suggested that engaging with universities and education providers would enable the development of a pool of potential NQT staff which could help recruitment during any future projects. To achieve the professional standards for teaching and leadership NQTs need a small teaching commitment guaranteed.
- 3.16 It was also suggested that a better understanding of each school's supply costs would be beneficial, with a system introduced 'to support collaboration to reduce the need for supply, and also improved evaluation processes to determine cost effectiveness and efficiency'.





Supernumerary teachers' current roles and future intentions


Key findings

- 11 out of the 12 supernumerary teachers who responded to the survey have been employed since September 2019 either as supernumerary teachers in their original clusters or in other teaching positions within or outside the cluster. One is no longer working in a teaching role.
- These 11 supernumerary teachers all expect to be employed in a supply or full-time teaching role from September 2020.
- Their current and planned roles and contracts are varied, including full-time permanent roles, fixed-term roles and agency supply roles.

- 3.17 The supernumerary teachers who responded to the survey provided information about the roles in which they have been working since September 2019, as well as their plans for September 2020 onwards. Almost all have continued working in some type of teaching role, though their contracts and roles vary. Table 3.2 summarises the current roles and plans reported by these supernumerary teachers.

Table 3.2: Supernumerary teachers' current roles and plans from September 2020

Roles since September 2019	Details of roles since September 2019	Plans from September 2020
Continued to be employed in the supernumerary teacher role in the same cluster 	All five have full-time, fixed-term contracts in the same cluster. One temporarily worked as a supply teacher with an outside agency in September – December 2019.	Two plan to work as daily supply with an agency; one does not think they will be employed in teaching (unless they find a permanent role); and the final two plan to be employed in a permanent teaching role in the same cluster.
Employed in a teaching role in the same cluster 	The first has an open-ended 0.92 teaching contract; the second has a full-time, fixed-term contract; and the third has a full-time permanent contract.	All plan to still be employed with their current contracts, though the second teacher hopes their contract will become a permanent one.
Employed in a teaching role outside of the cluster 	The first has a maternity cover contract; the second has a full-time, permanent contract teaching outside Wales; and the third gained a permanent, full-time contract within their cluster initially but then moved outside Wales and took up a fixed-term contract.	The first plans to continue with their maternity cover contract; the second plans to continue with their full-time, permanent contract; and the third doesn't yet know what their plans are.
No longer working in a teaching role 	This teacher chose to leave the profession and take up a non-teaching role outside Wales.	They do not know but might register with a supply agency if unable to continue with their current role.

Source: Supernumerary teacher survey, n=12.  = one supernumerary teacher.

































































The impact of the Project on supernumerary teachers

Key findings

- Almost all supernumerary teachers felt there had been a positive impact on their confidence, their teaching practice and professional learning opportunities.
- The majority also reported a positive impact on career progression and opportunities, although two felt there had been no impact on this area.
- Eight supernumerary teachers specified other ways in which the Project had an impact including: improvements in personal well-being; experience of and preparedness to work across different settings; fostered good relationships with colleagues; increased awareness of how important it is to find the right school for them; and learning opportunities outside their subject specialism.

3.18 Supernumerary teachers who responded to the survey were broadly positive about the impact their time as a supernumerary teacher had on them and their teaching career. Almost all felt there had been a positive impact on their confidence, their teaching practice and professional learning opportunities (though two reported no impact on their teaching practice or professional learning opportunities and one reported a negative impact on their confidence). The majority also reported a positive impact on career progression and opportunities, though two commented there had been no impact on this area. The impact of the Project on the supernumerary teachers is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Impact on supernumerary teachers

Impact		Response							
	Confidence								
									
	Teaching practice								
									
	Professional learning opportunities (including induction)								
									
	Career progression and opportunities								
									
	Other								
									
Key:		Significant positive impact					Some positive impact		
		No impact					Some negative impact		

Source: Supernumerary teacher survey, n=12.

3.19 In addition, eight supernumerary teachers specified other ways in which the Project had an impact on them and their teaching practice. The impacts they identified were varied and included:

- Improvements in personal well-being resulting from a secure job and positive line management;
- Increased experience of and preparedness to work across different schools, year groups, elements of the new curriculum and extra-curricular activities;
- Good relationships with colleagues;

- Increased awareness of how important it is to find the right school for them; and
- Creation of learning opportunities outside their own subject specialism.

“I developed relationships with a huge variety of people, professional and otherwise. Also the variety of prolonged experience in different settings was equivalent to other people’s careers.” (Supernumerary teacher survey response)

Experiences as a supernumerary teacher

Key findings

- Seven of the twelve supernumerary teachers who responded to the survey emphasised the valuable range of experiences the Project had provided.
- Other aspects of the Project teachers praised included the benefit of building relationships, working collaboratively, and the consistency the Project provided for them and learners.
- Supernumerary teachers identified some challenges they had experienced, including schools not making the best use of their role and the differing expectations of schools.

3.20 Supernumerary teachers provided their views on which elements of the Project had worked well. Seven of the supernumerary teachers chose to emphasise the valuable range of experience the Project offered across different schools, key stages and subject areas, as well as experience of different teaching approaches. Three teachers also emphasised the benefits of being able to get to know and build relationships with schools, pupils and learners, as well as working collaboratively with colleagues. Three also praised the consistency and continuity the Project provided for them and for learners. Two others also mentioned: the support they received to complete their NQT year; the organisation of the Project; the CPD opportunities made available to them; the skills and professionalism they were able to develop; and the teaching inspiration they had gained.

“Having the same supply teachers was good for pupils as they became familiar with that one person. This familiarity is useful for planning beforehand from a teacher’s perspective. I have never done supply through an agency but I

understand it can be difficult with the uncertainty. This was well-organised for everyone.”⁵ (Supernumerary teacher survey response, translated)

- 3.21 Supernumerary teachers also identified challenges they had experienced in the role. Five mentioned that, on occasion, schools did not make the best use of the supernumerary teacher role, for example by being slightly disorganised in planning how to best use their time, using them in a similar way to external agency supply staff or not providing enough respect for the role. A couple of supernumerary teachers also mentioned that: circumstances in schools were varied and harder in some than others (for example where there were leadership challenges); there were practical issues as would be the case in any supply role, such as travelling between schools and security access; and they initially found it challenging to adapt to the differing expectations and structures of each school. One teacher had found it challenging not having their own class to teach.

“Communication within schools can be a challenge and I am often moved within classes not long before the day begins. This does not leave me much time to read and understand what I am teaching.” (Supernumerary teacher survey response).

- 3.22 Six supernumerary teachers suggested improvements to any similar future projects to address supply cover needs. Three commented on the need to improve how supernumerary teachers are used to best effect and to ensure their time is organised effectively. Suggestions included: ensuring colleagues are aware of their roles; establishing shared calendars between schools to manage the allocation of supernumerary teachers in a fair and transparent way; ensuring that supernumerary teachers’ are deployed strategically and in a way that reflects their subject specialisms or areas of expertise; and ensuring both the supernumerary teachers and schools are fully prepared for their arrival. A couple of supernumerary teachers suggested a longer period in fewer schools might be beneficial, to become better acquainted with systems, learners and colleagues. Another teacher noted the need to ensure NQT support is in place.

⁵ Original quote in Welsh: “Roedd cael yr un athrawon yn cyflenwi yn dda i ddisgyblion gan ei fod yn gyfarwydd â’r un person ac yn dda wrth gynllunio o flaen llaw. Dwi byth wedi gwneud cyflenwi trwy asiantaeth ond yn deall ei fod yn gallu fod yn anodd gyda ansicrwydd. Roedd hyn yn gwbl wahanol ac yn drefnus i bawb.”

Additional comments on the impact of school closures on supernumerary teachers and their plans for September 2020

- 3.23 Follow-up interviews with four supernumerary teachers in April 2020 provided an opportunity to explore the effects of school closures on how supernumerary teachers were currently being deployed and their plans from September 2020 onwards. These interviews provided some insight into the short-term effects of the pandemic on a very limited sample of supply teachers. It is important to note that, in view of the very small sample size, the comments should be seen only as illustrations of the experiences and views of the teachers in question, and are not necessarily indicative of the wider views of supply teachers involved in the Project.

Effects on supernumerary teachers' roles and deployment

- 3.24 Teachers interviewed commented that the pandemic had 'impacted on their level of activity', although they also conceded that this was true of many experienced teachers. Supernumerary teachers also felt that the pandemic had created uncertainty about their roles and what was expected of them. Teachers reported that they had been tasked with arranging transition activity, building on links established with primary schools during the Project; developing pre-recorded video lessons and providing one-to-one support sessions to learners. Teachers commented that teaching remotely requires a 'different skill-set than those built up during a conventional, physical classroom'.

Effects on future plans and job opportunities

- 3.25 All four teachers interviewed expressed concern about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on their employment prospects in the short- and medium-term. Teachers noted that very few positions were currently being advertised, compared with previous years. Supernumerary teachers noted that the situation has led to them feeling uncertain about their future prospects. They recognised that the pandemic would have a significant impact on their "ability to seek permanent employment from September". Supernumerary teachers who had seen the benefit of the Project in providing a platform to enable them to secure stable teaching positions in schools felt that the uncertainty could force them to take a step back.

"A lot of us (supernumerary teachers) will only have general supply to fall back on and this has caused us some great concern and anxiety. Not only this, but I have been in teaching for 5 years and was looking towards this as a pivotal

moment to secure my future as a teacher in permanent employment.”

(Interview with supernumerary teacher)

- 3.26 Teachers interviewed did reflect on the positive experiences they had gained during the Project. Some reflected on the fact that they had already demonstrated an ability to work flexibly and to respond to different schools’ needs, working in different settings and bringing diverse and transferable skills.

Efficiencies and cost savings

Key findings

- £2.7 million grant fund was available, with £1.75 million claimed (November 2017 - August 2019).
- Teachers employed through the Project have covered just under 30 per cent of all teacher absence across participating clusters: 29,837 was the total number of days requiring cover in cluster schools, with 8,774 of these days covered by supernumerary teachers.

- 3.27 Final output data indicates that, of the £2.7m grant funding that was available to support the Project, £1.75m was claimed over the Project’s lifetime. This reveals that only two-thirds of the available grant was claimed, in most part due to the fact that most clusters commenced the Project from the second term of the first year (with some beginning later than this). Clusters also experienced difficulties in recruiting supernumerary teachers in some areas, which also impacted on the grant funding claimed.
- 3.28 Table 3.3 provides an overview of the comparison of cost to deliver the supply cover for the Welsh Government funded element of the Project (November 2017-August 2019). This enables a comparison between the total Welsh Government grant claimed by clusters during the Project and the estimated cost of using external supply agencies to cover the absences covered by supernumerary teachers. The data reveal that the grant funding claimed exceeds the estimated cost of agency-sourced supply cover by between £302,000 and £539,000. However, the figures do not provide the full account of supernumerary teacher allocation during the Project. For instance, one cluster’s total number of absence days was missing for the final claim period (April–September 2019). Due to variations in clusters’ interpretation of the data required there were some inconsistencies. Some clusters continued to use

existing internal supply cover arrangements during the Project. In addition, it is important to note that other overhead costs were covered by the grant, such as non-teaching time associated with the employment of teachers.

Table 3.3: Overview of the cost comparison in providing supply cover

Total grant available	£2,700,000
Amount claimed (Nov 2017-August 2019)	£1,749,825.08
Total number of absence days requiring cover	29,837 ⁶
Days covered by supernumerary teachers	8,774 ⁷
Estimated cost of using external supply agencies to cover the absences covered by Project supernumerary days	£1,210,812 – £1,447,710 ⁸

3.29 Finally, the evaluation team would guard against drawing conclusions on the cost-benefit of the Project, solely on the basis of the data set out in Table 3.3. When examining the question of costs and benefits associated with the Project, the above data must be considered in the context of the wider outcomes reported by schools and supernumerary teachers, including:

- Reported efficiencies and improvements to teaching and learning that cannot be easily quantified (investment in the quality of the supply teaching workforce; enhanced capacity to support target groups, including learners with ALN who have consequently been retained in mainstream education);
- associated benefits to learners through the enhanced quality of supply teaching through the project, including through improved learner behaviour;

⁶ Data missing for one cluster for the final claim period (April-August 2019).

⁷ In order to account for the missing data from one cluster for the final claim period, this figure includes the total days covered by supernumerary teachers during the corresponding claim period in the previous year.

⁸ The lower figure is based on the average day rate clusters paid for supply agency teachers, based on information provided in Project claim forms - £138. The higher figure is based on a Welsh Government rate paid to release teachers for the Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme, a national teacher training programme for Welsh language - £165.

- the added value to cluster schools by allowing them to release staff to attend professional development opportunities or work on school improvement priorities;
- positive impacts reported in relation to teacher workload and morale;
- improved collaboration between schools, including joint working to support effective transition processes;
- improved knowledge and understanding of the teaching and learning required for learners to transition effectively between key stages.

3.30 Without the Project, additional funding would have been needed to support these benefits, which were widely reported by participating schools, as noted in the full evaluation report.⁹

⁹ Duggan, B., Glover, A., Grover, T., Feehan, A. (2019). [*Evaluation of the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project*](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 50/2019.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The findings of this follow-up report – in and of themselves – do not lead the evaluation team to propose any substantial changes to the conclusions and recommendations set out in the main evaluation report, published in November 2019. However, since the publication of that report there have been unprecedented and profound changes faced by schools, teachers and learners as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent school closures. Although plans are in place to support a phased return for learners to a physical school environment, it is likely that schools will be operating in a different context for some considerable time to come, which will inevitably impact on workforce planning arrangements. It remains to be seen how this will affect schools' need for supply teachers in the short and medium term and approaches to managing these needs.
- 4.2 Given these ongoing uncertainties, we have not re-appraised the conclusions and recommendations presented in December 2019 in light of the current situation facing schools. Instead this report presents additional brief analysis of, and commentary on, final project output data and information on the plans and participating cluster schools and supernumerary teachers. These are presented below alongside key findings from the full evaluation report.
- 4.3 The School Based Supply Cluster Model Project **succeeded in enabling schools to work together to design and implement a range of innovative arrangements to address teacher absence cover.** Schools managed the project flexibly, devising different approaches to managing and timetabling the supernumerary teachers who were employed. Supernumerary teachers were deployed to address a range of tasks, including emergency supply cover; time to cover teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time; which could include the delivery of consistent cluster-wide projects; set regular class/subject lessons and transition project work.
- 4.4 **The pilot Project has supported a range of professional development opportunities for supernumerary teachers,** providing training to address individual teacher requirements and school development targets. Supernumerary teachers also benefitted from the development of their skills, competence and confidence, particularly through the experience of teaching across different phases in a range of schools. They were also positive about the pay and conditions associated with the role, and welcomed the recognition of their professional status.

The pilot Project has supported many supernumerary teachers to successfully complete their NQT induction.

- 4.5 **The pilot Project supported several teachers to secure permanent employment** while undertaking the supernumerary role, and some wanted to continue working in their current role or within one of their cluster schools. They believed that they are now in a better position to apply for these jobs. The main phase of the evaluation found that supernumerary teachers had built positive relationships within the school and wider community, putting them in a stronger position to apply for posts within their clusters. During follow-up research, 11 out of the 12 supernumerary teachers who responded to the survey have been employed since September 2019 either as supernumerary teachers in their original clusters or in other teaching positions within or outside the cluster. However, further interviews with a small sample of supernumerary teachers supported through the Project found that the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted negatively on their prospects of finding permanent posts from September 2020.
- 4.6 Final output data indicates that, **of the £2.7m grant funding that was available to support the Project, £1.75m was claimed over the Project's lifetime**. The total number of absence days requiring cover across all clusters during the Project was 29,837. Of these, 8,774 days were covered by supernumerary teachers supported through the Project. **The cost of using external supply agencies to cover the absences covered by Project supernumerary days is estimated to be less**, however as noted in section 3, schools and supernumerary teachers reported widespread positive outcomes that resulted from the Project, which need to be considered alongside the estimated value of supply covered by supernumerary teachers.
- 4.7 Data collected during the evaluation indicated that a third of clusters were continuing or planned to continue elements of the Project into the third year. **Follow-up research with nine cluster leads found that two had continued during the third year**. For those who had not sustained the cluster-based approach, financial barriers were cited as the main reason for not continuing. This echoes the issue raised in the main evaluation report, namely that the higher costs of employing permanent supernumerary teachers in a salaried position (compared to the ad hoc costs of recruiting supply teachers) leads to schools opting out of the

Project even though they recognise the model's value and benefits to teaching and learning.

- 4.8 **Follow-up contact with clusters that had continued into the third year found positive impacts in terms of the quality of teaching, the sharing of good practice between schools and pupil behaviour.** Conversely, those clusters that had not continued reported negative impacts on staff workload and well-being as a result of not having access to the additional support previously provided by supernumerary teachers.
- 4.9 One important legacy from the Project reported by participating schools was that the **collaborative working practice that had been established or strengthened during the Project had continued between cluster schools**, including those who were not sustaining cluster-based approaches to managing supply cover.
- 4.10 **Almost all supernumerary teachers who provided feedback during follow-up research felt there had been a positive impact on their confidence, their teaching practice and professional learning opportunities** through their involvement in the Project. Eight supernumerary teachers specified other ways in which the Project had an impact including: improvements in personal well-being; experience of and preparedness to work across different settings; good relationships with colleagues; increased awareness of how important it is to find the right school for them; and learning opportunities outside their subject specialism.
- 4.11 The main evaluation report concluded that there was sufficient evidence of successful outcomes from the Project for the Welsh Government to consider supporting a second phase of the School Based Supply Cluster Project, identifying a series of learning points for consideration in planning and designing a follow-up project. Whilst this conclusion remains, it stands to reason that this is unlikely to happen in the short term, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on schools. Nonetheless, there are several findings to emerge from the Project that are worth reflecting on at a time when schools will be operating in a different context, at least for some time to come. These include:
- **The importance of a flexible workforce:** the evaluation found that schools saw value in supernumerary teachers who were able to work across phases, covering the Foundation Phase, Key Stages 2 and 3. Schools and clusters found that this flexibility enabled and encouraged them to plan more

strategically across phases, leading to benefits to teaching and learning. Schools recognised that this enabled them to plan the deployment of the additional capacity in a strategic way, supporting whole-school improvement activities and wider priorities.

- **This also had a positive impact on transition for schools and learners.** The Project has enabled collaboration between schools that has supported schools' transition activities. Supernumerary teachers working across phases were able to develop longer term relationships with year 6 learners and the 'familiar face', and consistency in approach to behaviour and learning supported effective transition to the secondary phase.
- **School-to-school collaboration in the area of supply cover arrangements was new for those who took part in the Project.** The Project has prompted participating schools to explore other ways in which staffing capacity could be shared in mutually beneficial ways. The evaluation heard that schools were considering ways of pooling HLTAs, ALN specialists and PE teachers.
- Finally, the Project demonstrated the importance of **ensuring that NQTs** (who may be in short-term supply roles) **are able to benefit from professional development activity**, which impacted positively on their quality of teaching.

Annex A: Research tools

Online survey for cluster leads (Spring 2020)

Arad Research is continuing to evaluate the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project for the Welsh Government and wish to gather cluster leads' current views on the Project. This will inform a follow-up report in Summer 2020.

This survey is for both cluster leads who have continued to deliver the project for the third year, and those who are not delivering the project any more.

Participation in the research is voluntary. All information collected will be reported anonymously and included in a report, and possibly in other publications by the Welsh Government. Further information on how we will use your data is available in the privacy notice [here](#).

If you are happy to give your consent, please continue with the survey by clicking next page.

If you would like to receive further information about the evaluation, or if you have any comments, please contact Alison Glover on alison@arad.wales or 02920 440552.

Your cluster

1. Please select your cluster from the following *
2. How many supernumerary teacher roles were there in your cluster during the Project?
3. Has your cluster continued the project for year 3? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Year 3 funding

4. How is the third year of the Project funded? *

☐ Partly funded

☐ Wholly funded

Please provide detail regarding source of the funding (which budget?) and proportion funded.

5. Have there been any changes in the management and delivery of the Project during the third year (since Sept 2019)? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

If you answered yes, please explain what has changed? e.g. school allocation, approach to timetabling supernumerary, need to recruit new supernumerary teachers

Impact

6. Please comment on any impact you have observed during the third year of the Project. Please select all that apply

	Significant positive impact	Some positive impact	No impact	Some negative impact	Significant negative impact
Cost efficiencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Efficiencies in management time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivery of effective teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing of effective teaching practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learner behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for teacher training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff workload and well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any additional areas of impact, please provide further details.

Addressing supply needs

7. Do you still use other supply cover as well as your supernumerary teacher/s? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Meeting additional supply needs

8. How does your cluster meet additional supply needs now?

	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
NPS Framework agency supply teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non NPS Framework agency supply teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agency Classroom Teaching Assistants (HLTAs, TAs, cover supervisors)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Own employed supply teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other teachers employed at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom teaching assistants employed at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School senior managers/headteacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Approximately how many days of additional supply cover were needed during the Autumn term 2019?

Project not continuing for Year 3

9. Please explain why your cluster did not continue the Project for the third year? *

10. What has been the impact of not continuing with the project for the third year?

	Significant positive impact	Some positive impact	No impact	Some negative impact	Significant negative impact
Cost efficiencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Efficiencies in management time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing of effective teaching practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learner behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for teacher training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff workload and well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide further details

Employment of Supernumerary teachers

11. Have you, or any of your cluster schools employed any of the supernumerary teachers in the following capacity?

- ☐ Employed in a supply role for the school on a fixed term contract
- ☐ Employed in a supply role for the school on a permanent contract
- ☐ Employed in a supply role for another cluster school on a fixed term contract
- ☐ Employed in a supply role for another cluster school on a permanent contract
- ☐ Other (please specify):

12. How many supernumerary teachers have you or other cluster schools employed?

13. How have you or other cluster schools funded the employment of the teacher/s?

Managing current supply cover

14. How does your cluster meet supply needs now?

	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
NPS Framework agency supply teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non NPS Framework agency Higher Level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Teaching Assistants (HLTAs)					
Agency Classroom teaching Assistants (HLTAs, TAs, cover supervisors)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Own employed supply teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other teachers employed at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom teaching Assistants employed at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School senior managers/headteacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Approximately how many days of supply cover were needed during the Autumn term 2019?

15. Has your approach to managing supply needs altered as a result of your participation in the Project?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you answered yes, please explain

Future intentions

16. Will there be any changes to the management and delivery of supply cover from September 2020? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please explain your response (e.g. employment of teachers in supernumerary role or similar)

Reflections

17. Were there any effective practices introduced during the Project that schools/ the cluster have continued to use? (e.g. sharing resources/staff, increasing collaborative cluster working)

18. Please provide any reflections you have to improve similar school based supply cluster projects in future.

19. If you wish to provide further feedback via a short telephone interview, please provide your contact details below.

Name

School

Email

Telephone

Online survey for supernumerary teachers (Spring 2020)

Arad Research is continuing to evaluate the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project for the Welsh Government and wish to gather information on your experience, current employment status and future plans. This will inform a follow-up report in Summer 2020.

This survey is for both supernumerary teachers who have continued to work in their cluster, and those who no longer work in the cluster.

Participation in the research is voluntary. All information collected will be reported anonymously and included in a report, and possibly in other publications by the Welsh Government. Further information on how we will use your data is available in the privacy notice [here](#).

If you are happy to give your consent, please continue with the survey by clicking next page.

If you would like to receive further information about the evaluation, or if you have any comments, please contact Alison Glover on alison@arad.wales or 02920 440552.

About you

1. Please select your cluster from the following *

2. How many years did you work as a qualified teacher before your supernumerary role?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years

How long did you work / have you worked as a supernumerary teacher?

3. What has been your role since September 2019? *

- ☐ Continue to be employed in the supernumerary teacher role in the same cluster
- ☐ Employed in a teaching role in the same cluster
- ☐ Employed in a teaching role outside of the cluster
- ☐ Not employed
- ☐ No longer working in a teaching role
- ☐ Other

Please provide further details (e.g. part-time/full-time, type of contract)

Current situation

4. Please tick all that apply

- ☐ I have a fixed term teaching contract with a school in the cluster
- ☐ I am working as a supply teacher with a supply agency
- ☐ I have a permanent teaching contract with a school in the cluster
- ☐ I have a permanent teaching contract elsewhere
- ☐ I have a fixed term teaching contract elsewhere

Please provide further details (e.g. role/ length of contract)

Supply agency

Please indicate whether the supply agency is on the [National Procurement Service Supply Framework](#)

5. The supply agency is on the National Procurement Service Supply Framework. *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Impact of your supernumerary experience

6. Please provide comment on your experience as a supernumerary teacher

What worked well?

What challenges did you experience?

Suggested improvements for similar projects to address supply cover needs

7. What impact did your time as a supernumerary teacher have on you and your teaching career? Please select from the following.

	Significant positive impact	Some positive impact	No impact	Some negative impact	Significant negative impact
Confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional learning opportunities (including induction)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career progression and opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain any other impacts

Future plans

8. What are your plans from September 2020? *

- ☐ Employed in a fixed term teaching role in the same cluster
- ☐ Employed in a permanent teaching role in the same cluster
- ☐ Employed in a fixed term teaching role outside of the cluster
- ☐ Employed in a permanent teaching role outside of the cluster
- ☐ Working as a daily supply with a supply agency
- ☐ Not employed in teaching
- ☐ Don't know yet / Other

Please provide further details (e.g. role, any responsibility)

Supply agency

Please indicate whether the agency is on the [National Procurement Service Supply Framework](#)

9. The supply agency is on the National Procurement Service Supply Framework

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Contact details

10. If you wish to provide further feedback via a short telephone interview, please provide your contact details below.

Name	<input type="text"/>
School	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
Telephone	<input type="text"/>